



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Sunday, November 24, 1996

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Part of Garley Building to be closed

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The Director of Buildings, Dr Choi Yu-leuk, announced today (Saturday) that in view of severe fire damage, the top three storeys of Garley Building at No. 233-239 Nathan Road would be closed for carrying out permanent repair works.

An emergency closure order will be applied from the Court on Monday (November 25) for closing the premises.

Dr Choi said that the investigation yesterday revealed severe structural damage to the roof as well as the 15th floor.

"Some of the roof beams have sagged considerably with cracks developing. It is necessary to erect temporary shoring to these beams and both the 15th and 14th floors will need to be closed because of the imminent dangers.

"A closure order will also be applied for part of the 13th floor because of a portion of the floor slab was severely damaged by the fire and is liable to become dangerous," Dr Choi said.

A statutory order under section 26A of the Buildings Ordinance will be issued to the owners requiring them to appoint a building professional to carry out a detailed investigation to the premises and submit a repair proposal.

A demolition order will also be issued requiring the owners to remove an illegal structure on the roof.

Further inspections will be carried out to the premises from basement to 3rd floor as they were not accessible yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Buildings Department (BD) will carry out emergency works to remove immediate dangers. These works include:

- * a catch platform will be erected at the first floor external wall facing Nathan Road as a precautionary measure against possible falling of loose mosaic tiles.
- * All the loose window frames and damaged air-conditioners will be removed.

- * All the loose rendering, wiring and window glass along the two staircases of the building will be removed to restore a safe clear passage.
- * Barriers to all the lift door openings at each floor will be erected.

Dr Choi said that all these emergency works would commence on Monday.

"Our staff will closely monitor all these emergency works and other repairs works to ensure the safety of the occupants and the general public.

"At the same time, another BD team is carrying out a comprehensive investigation into the building works as at the time of the tragic accident so as to ascertain whether there is any deficiency in the fire protection of the building works or in the provision of means of escape in the building.

"We will examine what can be learnt in order to further enhance the protection to the public against building fire," Dr Choi said.

End

APEC enters action phase: STI

The Secretary for Trade and Industry, Miss Denise Yue, said the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) has now entered the action phase with the adoption of the Manila Action Plan for APEC (MAPA).

Making the remarks after the successful conclusion of the Eighth APEC Ministerial Meeting today (Saturday) in Manila, Miss Yue pointed out the last few years had been the vision and goal setting phase for APEC.

At the Ministerial Meeting, Ministers adopted the MAPA and agreed on some joint initiatives for the first World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Singapore next month. They also decided to end the moratorium for additional members.

"APEC members will, starting next year, progressively reduce barriers to trade and investment to achieve ultimately the free flow of goods, services and capital in the region. They will also introduce practical business facilitation measures to reduce the cost of doing business", she said.

"As our contribution to this process, Hong Kong will bind tariff at zero percent in the WTO on all imports in three stages by the year 2010, to provide certainty for business," she said.

"We will work to establish mutual recognition arrangements for product certification, and align standards for electrical appliances, pipes and fittings, and a range of food products with international standards".

The MAPA also sets out some 320 economic and technical cooperation projects being undertaken by APEC in a wide range of areas including human resources development, telecommunications, transportation and environmental protection.

On APEC's contribution to the WTO Ministerial Conference, Ministers endorsed the efforts at the WTO to conclude an information technology agreement by the Ministerial Conference and urged all other WTO members to work toward that end.

"I am pleased to see a strong commitment to successfully complete the WTO ongoing negotiations on financial services and basic telecommunications within the agreed time frames next year," Miss Yue said.

"An agreement on global liberalisation of these two sectors would provide greater overseas market access opportunities for Hong Kong's service providers."

"I am also delighted that there is a clear recognition of the need to ensure that the WTO is responsive to developments in the global economy", said Miss Yue.

APEC Ministers also decided not to extend the moratorium for new members which expires this year. They agreed that at the Ministerial Meeting next year the set of admission criteria would be adopted after being refined and updated. They further agreed that in 1998, new members would be announced based on the adopted criteria. New members would be admitted in 1999.

In 1994, APEC set a goal of free and open trade and investment to be attained by 2010 for industrialised economies and 2020 for developing economies.

In 1995, APEC adopted a blueprint of measures, called the Osaka Action Agenda, to achieve this goal. Under this Action Agenda, each member is required to draw up this year an Individual Action Plan setting out the actions that it will take to liberalise and facilitate trade and investment. In addition, members will undertake collective liberalisation and facilitation actions and economic and technical cooperation activities.

The MAPA is a document consolidating all these plans and activities, which will be formally submitted to APEC Economic Leaders for endorsement when they meet in Subic Bay, the Philippines on 25 November.

Hong Kong became a member of APEC in 1991 and is a founding member of the WTO. After June 1997, Hong Kong will continue to be a separate member of APEC and the WTO in its own right and on an equal basis using the name "Hong Kong, China".

End

Removal of unauthorised display materials prior to by-election

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A joint clearance operation will be launched by the Wong Tai Sin District Office, the Urban Services Department and the Lands Department on November 25 (Monday) to clear all unauthorised display materials in public areas within the San Po Kong constituency of the Wong Tai Sin District Board.

A spokesman for the Wong Tai Sin District Office said today (Saturday): "With the by-election for the San Po Kong constituency of the Wong Tai Sin District Board to be held on January 5 next year, the joint clearance operation is conducted as part and parcel of the process to ensure fair and equal treatment for all candidates in the display of election advertisement."

"Any unauthorised articles still on display in public areas within the San Po Kong constituency will be removed on November 25. The Government reserves the right to recover the removal costs from the parties concerned," the spokesman said.

End

Government lawyers to study China law at Fudan University

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Eight government lawyers will attend a short course on Chinese law tailor-made for them at Fudan University Law School in Shanghai next week.

The lawyers are at non-directorate level and include five counsel from the Legal Department, two legal aid counsel from the Legal Aid Department and one lawyer from the Intellectual Property Department.

The seven-day course, which is the first of its kind to be held and organised by the China Law Unit of the Legal Department, will commence on Monday (November 25).

A spokesman for the Legal Department noted that in accordance with the Basic Law, from July 1, 1997, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will continue to adopt a common law system in contrast to the civil law system in the rest of China.

"It is essential that in order to ensure the two different systems coexist smoothly and interact efficiently, there must be mutual understanding of each other's legal system," he said.

He pointed out that the China Law Unit of the department has been taking steps, through briefings and visits, to enhance understanding of the Hong Kong legal system in China. Steps have also been taken by the Unit to promote knowledge of PRC law in the Hong Kong government through organising seminars on PRC law for counsel in the department as well as other government lawyers.

For the Fudan University course, the spokesman said there would be a balance of classroom teaching and visits.

The course contents cover Chinese constitutional law, nationality law, administrative law, as well as the Basic Law of Hong Kong, lawyers' law, civil law, criminal law, practice & procedure, and intellectual property law, he said.

End

Help given to new arrivals in Wan Chai

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New arrivals from China who settled in Wan Chai were briefed today (Saturday) on the wide range of services designed to smooth their integration into the local community.

The new immigrants were visited in their homes by the Wan Chai District Officer, Mrs Elaine Tang, and members of the Wan Chai District Board and area committees in the district as part of the programme of home visits under the "Wan Chai District Visit New Immigrants Day".

Jointly organised by the Wan Chai District Office and four area committees, the programme aims to instil in the new arrivals a sense of belonging in the district, ascertain the difficulties they might have encountered and offer, when necessary, practical advice and assistance to overcome their problems of adjustment. It is also held to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the District Administration Scheme in Hong Kong.

The new arrivals took a keen interest in Mrs Tang's briefing on the work of the District Office's Public Enquiry Services Centre, the district board and the area committees and the information leaflets they were given on Hong Kong's education system, employment situation, housing facilities and other relevant facts which may affect their daily lives.

The visitors in turn took a genuine interest in how the new immigrants had tried to adapt to life in Hong Kong, and obtained first-hand information on their needs. Some useful advice was offered to them on the spot and some of them were directed to appropriate government departments or non-governmental organisations for assistance.

"We also encouraged the new arrivals to take part in a wide range of community involvement activities including the territory-wide 'Serving the Community Week' from December 1 to 7 and the Wan Chai Festival in January, 1997.

"We hope we can better understand the needs of the new arrivals and respond to them more effectively," Mrs Tang said.

The next series of visits will take place on December 1.

End

Firing practice in December

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Firing practice will take place at the Ha Tsuen/Castle Peak Range on 11 days next month (December). Members of the public are advised not to enter the area when red flags are hoisted.

Following are the dates and times for the firing practice:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
December 2 (Monday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 3 (Tuesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 4 (Wednesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 5 (Thursday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 9 (Monday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 10 (Tuesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 11 (Wednesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 12 (Thursday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 17 (Tuesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 18 (Wednesday)	8.30 am - 5 pm
December 19 (Thursday)	8.30 am - 5 pm

End

Tide tables for 1997 published

The 'Tide Tables for Hong Kong 1997', published recently by the Royal Observatory to provide an informative reference on tides in Hong Kong, is now available for sale.

The publication contains detailed information on the predicted heights and times of daily high and low waters at eight locations in the territory. They are: Chi Ma Wan, Ko Lau Wan, Lok On Pai, Quarry Bay, Tai O, Tai Po Kau, Tsim Bei Tsui and Waglan Island. Phases of the moon are also given.

At \$9 a copy, the publication can be purchased from the Government Publications Sales Centre, Marine Department Headquarters and Royal Observatory Headquarters. The publication is useful reference material for engineers, shipping and wharfing companies, container terminal operators, yachtsmen, fishing and water sports enthusiasts.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$million</u>	<u>Time</u> <u>(hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative</u> <u>change</u> <u>(\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,939	0930	-60
Closing balance in the account	2,369	1000	-60
Change attributable to:		1100	-60
Money market activity	-60	1130	-60
LAF today	-510		

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.2 *+0.0* 23.11.96

Closed November 23, 1996

End

FS's transcript

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Following is the transcript of the media session by the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, after meeting the Canadian Prime Minister in Manila today (Sunday):

Question: Just what came out of your talk specifically on the SAR passports with Canada?

Financial Secretary: I again emphasised our wish that the visa free access for Hong Kong residents, particularly for the SAR passports holders, will be given to them by Canada after July 1997. I got a very sympathetic hearing from Prime Minister Chretien. I am pretty confident that some good announcement will be made very shortly on this.

Question: Within this summit?

Financial Secretary: No. I don't want to be more specific on timing.

End

Fire safety in industrial premises

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As both commerce and industry develop rapidly in Hong Kong, coupled with population growth, the chances of fire outbreaks also increase, the Director of Fire Services, Mr Peter Cheung, said today (Sunday).

Speaking at the launching of the fire prevention campaign, Mr Cheung said the tragic No.5 Alarm fire in Jordan proved that the nature of fires nowadays also became more complicated.

In the past two years, fire personnel attended about 60,000 fire calls and fires claimed a total of 64 lives and caused 1,131 injuries.

Among the casualties, about 10 per cent were injured in fires in industrial premises.

Mr Cheung said: "Most of the fires in industrial premises are caused by negligence and carelessness of people. Careless handling of dangerous goods is also another major cause of fire."

"These include wedging of smoke lobby doors, inadequate repairs and maintenance of fire service installations, means of escape being obstructed or locked, over storage of dangerous goods and illegal alteration of partitions or design of buildings."

Mr Cheung said: "We have continuously sent out letters to remind factory owners or persons in charge of old industrial buildings in the territory, hoping they will consider upgrading the fire service installations such as sprinkler system in the buildings.

"The Department also frequently arranges fire prevention talks for building management agents and staff of industrial undertakings to publicise and strengthen fire protection education.

Following last year's emphasis on fire prevention in commercial premises, the campaign this year takes on the theme "Fire Prevention in Industrial Premises".

Mr Cheung said the Fire Services Department had produced a set of video and pamphlets on the theme for distribution to major industrial organisations to enhance public awareness.

At the ceremony, Mr Cheung also presented copies of the video production to representatives from the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, the Hong Kong Plastic Association Union Limited and the Labour Department.

In addition to the distribution of the publicity materials, the Department will organise a series of open days in fire stations and radio programmes to publicise fire safety messages.

Mr Cheung thanked the Kwong On Bank for their continuous sponsorship of the campaign.

End

Guidelines for provision of parking facilities revised

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Chapter Eight of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) on internal transport facilities has been revised.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the "Parking Demand Study" completed in December 1995, revisions were made on the planning standards and guidelines relating to the provision of parking and loading/unloading facilities, a spokesman for the Planning Department said today (Sunday).

"Under the revised standards and guidelines, the provision of parking facilities for major land uses including public and private residential, commercial and industrial developments have been raised.

"New parking standards have also been prepared for new land uses including industrial/office and sandwich class housing developments," he said.

The new standards and guidelines are set out in a new Table 11 of the revised chapter. No major changes have been made to the remainder of the chapter which covers standards and guidelines for roads, public transport terminals and rail facilities.

Copies of the updated Chapter Eight are being printed and will be available for sale by the end of this year.

In the mean time, the revised standards and guidelines of Chapter Eight are available for inspection at the Planning Information and Technical Administration Unit of the Planning Department, 16th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong.

HKPSG comprises a series of 11 chapters, each of which is devoted to a particular aspect of land use or facility. They are being sold on an individual chapter basis at the Government Publications Centre, ground floor, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

End

Precautionary measures against food-borne diseases

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The Department of Health today (Sunday) called on members of the public to adopt proper food hygiene practices when having hotpots in winter.

In making the appeal, the Assistant Director of Health (Hygiene), Dr Leung Pak-yin, warned the general public of the possible food-borne diseases such as food poisoning and hepatitis A.

"Staff of food establishments should always observe hygiene practices in preparing food for hotpots," Dr Leung said.

"Customers, on the other hand, should make sure that food items are thoroughly cooked before consumption."

Housewives should also observe good hygiene practices when preparing hotpots at home.

Dr Leung advised the public to observe the following precautionary measures:

For shellfish -

- * Use only wholesome and preferably live ones;
- * Remove the dirt with a brush and rinse shellfish thoroughly in clean water;
- * Discard the intestines and other dubious or inedible parts such as shells;
- * Cook thoroughly before consumption; and
- * Keep under refrigeration if not for immediate consumption.

For vegetables -

- * Do not patronise illegal hawkers;
- * Do not buy those with an obvious strange smell;
- * Remove the outer leaves;
- * Wash well in clean water and immerse in water for one hour;
- * Or use boiling water to blanch the vegetable for one minute. Water used for blanching should be discarded; and
- * Cook thoroughly.

"Wholesome raw materials, proper washing and handling, and thorough cooking are the best measures against gastro-intestinal diseases. Members of the public should observe these hygiene practices at all times," Dr Leung added.

End

Public invited to design logo for Year of Heritage

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Those who wish to test their creativity are invited to help design a logo for the 1997 Year of Heritage, jointly organised by the Antiquities and Monuments Office of the Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch, the Antiquities Advisory Board and the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust.

The logo should be artistic and able to help arouse public understanding of the importance of heritage preservation.

The competition is divided into two sections - the Open Section for Hong Kong residents and the Student Section for secondary students.

Entry forms, together with the specifications of the design required, are obtainable from various District Offices and the Antiquities and Monuments Office at 136 Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. Entries must be submitted to the Office on or before December 20.

The entries will be adjudicated by a panel consisting of members of the Publicity and Publication Task Force of the Year of Heritage and representatives from the Antiquities Advisory Board and the Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch. The decision of the panel is final.

The champion of the Open Section will be awarded \$10,000 and the Student Section \$4,000. There will be four merit winners for the Open Section (\$2,000 each) and ten merit winners for the Student Section (\$1,000 each). Certificates will also be presented to all winners.

The winning entry selected as the logo of the Year of Heritage will be used in posters, souvenirs and related educational and promotional activities.

Further enquiries can be made at 2721 2326.

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